The National Network of Libraries of Medicine, MidContinental Region

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by

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Introduction

The MidContinental Regional Medical Library (RML) aims to "develop, promote and improve access to electronic health information resources by Network member libraries, health professionals and organizations providing health information to the public." This goal forms part of the core mission in the Regional Services Plan for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, MidContinental Region (NN/LM-MCR), as proposed to the National Library of Medicine (NLM). Further, the NN/LM-MCR program includes a formal assessment and evaluation component aimed at "identifying and tracking trends in the development or failure of libraries" and the "identification of baseline and emerging services being provided by libraries in the Network."

To carry out these program goals, the MidContinental RML Assessment and Evaluation Liaison developed a questionnaire to elicit information from regional member libraries about their staffing, the availability of technology, access to educational programs, and their relationship to the RML and the NLM. The data provide a picture of the region early in the 2001-2006 NN/LM-MCR contract, and serve as a baseline against which change in the availability of information resources and services can be measured in the future. The complete data tabulations available on the web include regional summary data, along with breakdowns by state and by type of library. This report presents regional level summary data for the most part, with some results grouped by library type where this is more meaningful. The library types are 1) hospital libraries and 2) academic/other libraries. (A separate report that highlights the survey results for hospital libraries is also available from the MidContinental RML.)

Methodology and Response Rate

The Network Membership Inventory, Fall 2002 (see Appendix) was mailed to 216 regional NN/LM Member libraries identified from NLM DOCUSER records, and the questionnaire was also made available on the NN/LM-MCR web site. Of these 216 member libraries, 8 are Resource Libraries, 130 are hospital libraries, and 78 are other types of libraries. Respondents either mailed in the survey or submitted responses via the web form, although some used both means. In cases where multiple responses were received from an individual library, the responses were compared to eliminate duplication, and the data was entered only once. Some libraries did not answer all the questions, so the total number of responses varies from one question to another. The data were input, tabulated, and mounted on the web by staff at the Bernard Becker Medical Library, Washington University School of Medicine.

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¹ http://medweb.wustl.edu/backer/rml or navigate from the NN/LM-MCR web site at http://nnlm.gov/mcr > Assessment and Evaluation > Fall 2002 Network Member Survey Results.

The overall survey response rate was 56%, with 122 respondents. The response rate for hospital libraries was 66% (86 responses), and the response rate for academic/other libraries, was 42% (36 academic/other libraries, including 7 Resource Libraries). The total number of survey responses for the region, responses by state, and responses by type of library, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Survey Responses by State and by Type of Library

Responses	All Libraries	Hospital Libraries	Academic/Other Libraries
Regional	122	86	36
Colorado	33	26	7
Kansas	19	16	3
Missouri	40	27	13
Nebraska	8	3	5
Utah	13	9	4
Wyoming	9	5	4

Analysis and Discussion of Survey Results

Network Members

The distribution of hospital and academic/other libraries by state within the region (Table 2) shows Missouri with the largest number of health science libraries, 75 libraries or 34% of the region's 216 Member libraries, and Wyoming with the smallest number, 13 libraries or 6%.

Table 2. Member Library Distribution by State and Population.

State	Total libraries in state ²	Population in millions ³	Libraries per 100,000 population
Colorado	49	4.3	1
Kansas	30	2.6	1
Missouri	74	5.6	1.3
Nebraska	25	1.7	1.2
Utah	25	2.2	1.1
Wyoming	13	0.5	2.6

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² DOCLINE Libraries receiving questionnaires

³ 2000 U.S. Census

On the basis of the number of libraries per 100,000 population, Wyoming has twice or more the number of health science libraries as any state in the Region (Table 2). Wyoming's geographic characteristics of distance and terrain, more dispersed population with no large urban centers, and overall smaller population may explain the higher proportion of health science libraries in that state than in other states of the region.

Staffing and Library Usage

Staffing at Network member libraries varies greatly, even between libraries of the same type. Four respondents indicated no staffing (neither librarian nor staff), including three (3) hospital libraries and one (1) special library. Presumably, the survey was completed by other departmental staff with no assigned library hours. Hospital libraries report between 0 and 4 full time equivalent (FTE) librarians and between 0 and 4 FTE staff, with slightly more librarians (1.2) than staff (1) per hospital on average. Academic and other libraries report between 0 and 29.5 FTE librarians (with an average of 6) and between 0 and 75 staff (12.8 on average). Almost all libraries that had at least one part-time librarian on staff reported a minimum of 0.5 FTE, with the exception of two (2) libraries that reported 0.2 FTE and 0.3 FTE librarians respectively. For all types of libraries combined, the regional average is 2.55 FTE librarians and 5.73 FTE staff.

Respondents were asked to indicate how many individuals their libraries serve/assist per day, both in person and by phone, email, or other means. Overall, numbers served range from a low of one (1) individual to a high of 900 people served per day. Individuals served by hospital libraries range from a low of 1 per day to a high of 250 per day (35 per day per library on average), with a total of over 2,500 users served by the 70 regional hospital libraries responding to the question on library usage. Academic/other libraries report serving from 2 to 900 individuals per day (174 served per day per library on average), with a total of over 6,000 served by the 34 academic/other library respondents. All regional libraries together (104 respondents) report serving 8,608 individuals per day!

Computers and Connectivity

Overall, computers are widely available for both library staff and users, and almost all of these computers have Internet access. Among academic/other libraries, all have at least one Internet accessible computer available for library staff, with a regional high of 100 computers with Internet access per library; the regional average (34 respondents) is 18 computers with Internet access per academic/other library. Of the total 693 library staff computers in academic/other libraries, 92% (640) have Internet access. With the exception of just one (1) library, respondents report offering at least one computer for users, up to a high of 167 user computers in one library, with a regional average of 26 user computers per library. Almost all academic/other libraries offer computers with Internet access for users; only four (4) academic/other libraries indicate no Internet access from library user computers. Of the total 877 user computers in regional academic/other libraries, 89% (784) have Internet access.

Among hospital libraries, all but one library reports at least one Internet accessible computer available for library staff, with a regional high (among 86 respondents) of 19 staff computers with Internet access; the regional average is two (2) staff computers with Internet access. Of the regional total of 239 hospital library computers, 98% (235) have Internet access. All but five (5) hospital libraries indicate having at least one computer with Internet access for users, up to a high of 16 user computers in one hospital library, with a regional average of 4 user computers per hospital library. Of the total 365 reported user computers in regional hospital libraries, 95% (345) have Internet access.

Internet connection speeds of T-1 or faster are present in the majority of regional libraries (67 of 120 respondents, or 56%). Another 24% of respondents (29) report high speed (cable, DSL, or ISDN) Internet access. The remaining 20% of respondents don't know the connection speed (19 respondents, including 17 hospital libraries and 2 academic/other libraries) or have dial-up access (2 hospital library respondents have 28.8K, 7 hospital library respondents have 56.6K, and 1 academic/other respondent has 56.6K). The MidContinental RML notes the need to assist the libraries with dial-up access in identifying strategies for upgrading their connections. In addition, further investigation is needed of the situation of libraries who do not know their connection speed (in order to assist effective communications with the information technology support area of their institution or to provide technology assistance in determining the connection speed of their computing equipment).

Collections and Collection Management

In the area of collections and collection management, 61% of regional libraries (74 of 121 respondents) report they subscribe to electronic journals. While some libraries report entering electronic journal subscriptions via consortia or other purchase plans, a number of libraries comment that they receive electronic journals only if they come free with the print subscriptions, if electronic subscriptions are required along with the print subscriptions, or if the electronic journals come bundled with another agreement (for a search service or other electronic product).

Education and Outreach Programs

Education Programs

Most regional libraries provide some type of training (82% of the 120 libraries responding). The breadth of training is described in the following table, where the value indicates the number of libraries providing training on the topic listed:

Table 3. Library Training Topics

Response	PubMed	Other Medline software	MEDLINEplus	Searching the Internet	_	PDAs	Microsoft or other software
Region	83	42	54	81	79	6	17
Colorado	24	15	15	22	23	2	3
Kansas	12	2	9	13	10	0	2
Missouri	24	16	13	24	25	2	6
Nebraska	6	4	6	7	6	1	2
Utah	11	3	7	9	12	1	2
Wyoming	6	2	4	6	3	0	2

Note: An individual library could select more than one topic.

Several libraries listed additional training topics such as searching nursing (CINAHL), pharmaceutical (MICROMEDEX), chiropractic, and veterinary/agricultural (Agricola, CAB) literature; other online services and products, including electronic journals; evidence-based medicine resources; and consumer health information and patient education resources.

The means of delivery of training are primarily one-on-one training and classroom sessions, with some web-based training and pre-recorded/audiovisual training (Table 4). The percentage of web-based training (a fairly new technology application) is higher at academic/other libraries than at hospital libraries, though the actual numbers of libraries of both types are comparable.

Table 4. Delivery Format for Library Training

Responses from	Libraries Responding	One-on-One	Classroom	Web-Based	Recorded (videos, audiotape, etc.)
Region	122	94 (77%)	72 (59%)	15 (12%)	8 (7%)
Hospital Libraries	86	67 (78%)	48 (56%)	7 (8%)	6 (7%)
Academic/ Other Libraries	36	26 (72%)	23 (64%)	8 (22%)	2 (5%)

Note: An individual library could select more than one delivery format.

In answer to the question on the library's audience for training programs, all libraries responding (101) indicate "primary users," as would be expected; 21% (21 of 101 respondents) report "outside individuals," and 23% (23 of 101 respondents) identify "library staff" as an audience for training programs.

Regarding staff enrollment in education programs, libraries responding to this question (114) report classes on health information resources (56 or 59%), software (40 or 35%), or other topics (55 or 48%). However, approximately 25% of respondents (28) responded "none" in response to the question on whether they or their staff had enrolled in classes

during the previous 12 months. (Comments on later survey questions highlight the lack of locally available continuing education in some areas and the lack of time for attendance, which may in part explain these responses.) For the libraries that report attending training of some type, the most frequently cited sponsors are the Medical Library Association (MLA) and the Midcontinental Chapter of MLA (MCMLA). Other sponsors are the library's parent institution or system; vendors; local consortia and federal library networks; the Bibliographical Center for Research (BCR); the Special Libraries Association; and the National Library of Medicine.

Outreach Programs

Outreach generally refers to efforts to raise awareness of health information resources among consumers and health care practitioners. While not every Network member is positioned to conduct formal outreach programs, many do provide library services to individuals not affiliated with the institution, which contributes greatly to the NN/LM mission of improving access to health information. Indeed, among survey respondents, 74% of regional libraries (87 of 118) indicate they serve unaffiliated individuals.

When asked about formal outreach programs that target groups or individuals outside their institution, 32 % (30 of 94 respondents) indicate they do provide outreach services. The actual percentage of regional libraries that offer outreach is likely somewhat lower because nearly 25% of respondents left this question blank. Even so, this is a significant level of participation, especially as support for Network member outreach efforts has been a programmatic priority for the NN/LM over the last decade. Libraries from all states in the region offer outreach programs, with Colorado and Missouri reporting the highest numbers of programs. About half of those undertaking outreach evaluate the results or effect of the programs and services they provide. The MidContinental RML notes that encouraging outreach evaluation is an area of continued emphasis for library development and consultation programs in the region.

Network member libraries with formal outreach programs (30) target the general public (21), public libraries (15), unaffiliated health care providers (15), and public health departments and agencies (11). Other groups targeted include veterinarians, dental health professionals, and community-based practitioners, including family practitioners, community preceptors, and community nurses. Special populations targeted in formal outreach programs include African Americans (2), immigrants and new Americans (3), inner city health professionals (2), Native Americans (5), rural health professionals (8), Spanish language speakers (6), veterans (1), and people whose primary language is not English (1). A number of outreach activities are focused on various age groups and special health care populations: children (13), teens (12), seniors (14), women (12), expectant mothers (8), the AIDS community (8), the substance abuse community (7), and men (1).

Communication

The RML is particularly interested in Network members' perceptions of the NN/LM and the RML's programs and services. Several survey questions addressed how librarians

communicate with each other and with the RML. The survey invited input as well on the value of various NLM and NN/LM programs and services.

Communication within the Region

Survey respondents were asked to rank several methods that might be used in communicating with other Network members (Table 5). E-mail in general was ranked as 4 or 5 (with 5 being "essential") by 93% of respondents who use it, and DOCLINE-L was also ranked very highly by 88% of users responding. Meetings of professional associations, consortium meetings, etc. were next in importance (79% ranked meetings 4 or 5), and Medlib-L is essential to the majority of users responding (65% ranked it 4 or 5). A handful of people (9) haven't used meetings as a communication method, 30 haven't used Medlib-L, and 18 haven't used DOCLINE-L. The number of Network members not using DOCLINE-L is of some concern, as it is the primary forum for DOCLINE discussion and NLM announcements and was so highly rated by those who do use it.

Table 5. Communication within the Region

Responses	Libraries Responding with Ranking (1 to 5)	Essential 5	4	3	2	Not Useful 1	Rank 5 or 4 %	Haven't Used
Meetings	103	61	20	14	7	1	79%	9
E-Mail	116	96	12	7	1	0	93%	0
Medlib-L	83	31	23	20	7	2	65%	30
DOCLINE-L	85	56	19	12	8	0	88%	18

Survey respondents were also asked to rank the methods the MidContinental RML (MCRML) uses to communicate with its Network members (Table 6). The RML's formal means of communicating with members include the MCMLA listserv; the MCRML website; the print *Plains to Peaks Post*, a quarterly newsletter of regional interest; a weekly email newsletter sent to MCMLA listserv subscribers; and personal calls and visits. Librarians were asked to rate the usefulness of these means of informing the regional community about services, health information resources, funding opportunities, and other topics of interest.

Table 6.MCRML Communications

Responses	Libraries Responding with Ranking (1 to 5)	Essential 5	4	3	2	Not Useful 1	Rank 5 or 4 %	Haven't Used
MCMLA Listserv	78	51	23	10	4	0	95%	30
MCRML Website	74	32	16	24	2	0	65%	38
Plains to Peaks Post	86	24	24	26	8	4	56%	29
RML Weekly News via email	81	39	23	15	1	3	77%	35
Calls/Visits	63	29	21	9	4	0	79%	48

While all the communication methods are ranked as essential (ranked 4 or 5) by a majority of respondents, the various methods are each nonetheless indicated as "not used" by a substantial number of Network member respondents. No one communication method is used by all Network members. Eight (8) respondents indicate they don't use any of the communications methods usually employed by MCRML (though they did receive and reply to the Network Member Inventory). Clearly, the MCRML should continue to communicate with members through a variety of channels, and MCRML must re-double efforts to increase awareness of the various communications options available. In terms of communications strategies, the communications methods that employ "push" technology, whereby listserv and e-mail messages are delivered to the librarian's electronic inbox, and personal calls and visits from RML liaisons, with direct interactions, are ranked as most essential. The MCRML website and newsletter, while important to many users, are not ranked as highly in comparison.

Members and the NN/LM Network

The final portion of the survey asked Network Members to identify benefit(s) provided to their library by the NN/LM Network (Table 7). Respondents could simply check any and all selections that they consider benefits of membership; there was also space to list any additional benefits. Most respondents view DOCLINE as a member benefit. While some of the programs and services identified by most respondents as member benefits—NLM databases, including MEDLINEplus; continuing education opportunities; and communications such as discussed above—are also available to nonmembers, the availability of training, consultation, and support from state and special project liaisons increases their value to members. (However, this information was not specifically sought, and several librarians noted that the databases were available regardless of membership status.) Many respondents identify free promotional materials as a benefit. Relatively few respondents identified opportunities for input on Network programming and funding support as NN/LM Member benefits—obviously these are program areas needing increased effort on the part of MCRML to increase member awareness and participation.

Respondents identified additional NN/LM benefits not presented on the survey checklist: availability of helpful, friendly resource people; connection to information experts and to a professional community; and the NN/LM Membership certificate, which is viewed as adding to the individual library's credibility.

Table 7. NN/LM Benefits

NN/LM Benefits	Libraries Responding (Total = 122)
DOCLINE	119
NLM databases	97
Consumer health information sources such as MEDLINEplus	93
Enhanced communication with other library professionals	91
Continuing education	80
Free promotional materials	51
Opportunities to provide input on Network programming	39
Funding programs	31

The survey asked members to identify benefits or services they would like to receive from the RML that they are not currently receiving or are not currently available. The examples given on the questionnaire were teleconferences and consortia buying, which generated many comments in favor of cooperative purchase agreements (especially for electronic resources, including journals, and presumably negotiated by the NN/LM) and teleconferences. Other desired benefits cited are assistance with technical issues, such as firewalls and scanning to PDF; online training; basic library skills training for those without a library background; cost offsets to attend teleconferences sponsored by agencies other than the NN/LM or NLM; additional course offerings from NN/LM; and more help with grants.

Finally, the survey asked which NLM services are used and requested positive or negative feedback on each service listed. Most of the services listed are used by a high number of respondents, with the exception of funding programs for project support. Securing NN/LM funding support entails rigorous effort on the part of the Network member throughout the application and implementation phases of a project, so it is not surprising that a large proportion of respondents have not yet participated. Furthermore, only six (6) respondents indicate they "don't need" funding programs for project support, and 78 reply positively that they "haven't used [them] yet." Quite a few respondents (26) have not yet taken advantage of courses sponsored by the NN/LM, but only a few indicate the courses are not needed at all.

Table 8. Services Use and Assessment

NLM & NN/LM	Libraries				
Services	Responding	Like	Don't	Don't	Haven't

	to the Question		Like	Need	Used Yet
DOCLINE	121	119	0	2	0
PubMed	120	112	4	3	1
MEDLINEplus	119	110	1	2	6
Funding programs to support your projects	104	16	2	6	78
Courses sponsored by the NN/LM	109	80	0	3	26
Communication with other librarians	109	104	0	0	5
Free promotional materials	112	82	0	11	19

Conclusion

The responses of health science libraries that participated in the fall 2002 Network Member Inventory yield the following observations about the NN/LM MidContinental Region:

- Library staffing patterns vary tremendously, with a regional average of 1.2 librarians and 1 staff for hospital libraries and an average of 6 librarians and 12.8 staff for academic/other libraries.
- Computers are widely available for both library staff and users, almost all of these computers have Internet access, and 80% of computers with Internet access are connected via a high speed (cable, DSL, ISDN, T-1, or faster) connection.
- Many libraries (61%) receive at least some electronic journals, though they would like improved acquisition mechanisms and better selection of resources.
- Most libraries (82%) provide training for library users and staff on a wide variety of topics, including NLM databases, commercial search systems, Internet searching, library use, evidence-based medicine resources, and consumer health information; most libraries offer one-on-one training (77%), many offer classroom training (59%), and some offer web-based training (12%) or use audiovisual formats (7%).
- Librarians and/or staff at most libraries (75%) enrolled in educational programs, most often those offered by the Medical Library Association (MLA) and the Midcontinental Chapter of MLA.
- One-third of regional libraries offer some type of formal outreach to raise awareness of health information resources among consumers and health care practitioners.
- Most regional libraries find their e-mail systems and DOCLINE-L essential for communication within the region; professional meetings and Medlib-L are essential to many as well.
- Most libraries consider the following as Network member benefits—DOCLINE;
 NLM databases and consumer health information services; continuing education;
 and enhanced communication with other library professionals.

- Libraries identified benefits and services they would like to receive—more educational opportunities via teleconference; improved cooperative purchase agreements, especially for electronic health science journals; assistance with technical issues; additional course offerings from NN/LM; and more help with grants.
- NLM and NN/LM programs and services are used extensively and valued highly by Network members.

Appendix



III) Collections, Education and Outreach

A) Collections and Collection Management

MidContinental Regional Medical Library Network Membership Survey

Fall 2002

I)	Ne	twork Member Information
	A)	Institution/Library Name (Please correct if necessary)
	B)	DOCLINE LIBID (Please correct if necessary)
	C)	Name and Title of Person completing Survey
	D)	How many full time equivalent (FTE) librarians/library staff are employed in your library? Use your institution's definition of librarian and of staff FTE Librarians FTE Staff
	E)	Please estimate, on average, how many individuals your library serves/assists per day – both in person and by phone/email/or other means?
II)	Со	mputers and Connectivity
	A)	Computers
lf t	the	many computers are in your library? for Librarian(s)/staff for Users re are no computers in your library, do you have access to a computer outside the ry but within your building? Yes No
		computer you use most often: _ Dedicated to your work only _ Shared with other library staff _ Shared with other non-library staff (physicians, nurses, secretaries, etc.) Connectivity
	ow ser:	many computers in your library have Internet access? Librarian(s)/staff
Di	al-ı	is the speed of your Internet connection? up at28.8K56.6K vorkHigh speed (cablemodem, DSL, or ISDN) T-1 or faster Don't Know

Does your library subscribe to electronic journals?YesNo
If Yes, do you purchase e-journals through a consortium or some group purchase plan? YesNo
If Yes, what consortium or group plan?
B) Education Programs
Does your library provide training?YesNo (If no, go to B5)
If yes, on what topics? PubMed
Other Medline software MEDLINEplus
Searching the Internet Using the library
PDAs Microsoft or other commercial software
Other (please provide details)
If you provide training, what means of delivery are used? (Check all that apply)One-on-OneClassroom instructionWeb-based instruction
Recorded (videos, audiotape, etc)
Who is your audience for training? Primary Users
Individuals outside my institutionLibrary staff
During the last 12 months, have you or your staff enrolled in classes on (Check all that apply)
Health Information Resources
General software (i.e., MS Word, Photoshop, etc)
Other (management topics, hardware troubleshooting, supervising, etc) No classes taken (Go to Question C1)
If classes were taken, please tell us who sponsored the classesMLAMCMLA Other (please specify)

Do you provide services to individuals not affiliated your institution? YesNo (If No, go to Part IV Question A1)
Do you have formal outreach programs that target groups or individuals outside your institution? Outreach generally refers to efforts to raise awareness of health information resources among consumers and health care practitioners. Yes No (If No, go to Part IV Question A1)
If you have a formal outreach program what communities are targeted?
General Public
Health Care Providers unaffiliated with your institution
Public Health Departments and Agencies Public Libraries
Other (specify)
What, if any, special populations are targeted in your current outreach activities?
African Americans
Immigrants & New Americans
Inner City Health professionals
Native Americans
Rural Health Professionals
Spanish language speakers
Other (Please specify:
What age groups or special health care populations are included or targeted in your current
outreach activities?
Children
Teens
Seniors
Women
Expectant Mothers
AIDS Community (both health professionals and affected populations) Substance Abuse Community (both health professionals and affected populations)
Other (please specify)
Do you evaluate the results or effect of outreach programs and services you provide?No
IV) Communication

C) Outreach – providing services to groups and/or individuals outside your institution

A) Communication within the Region

Please rank the usefulness of ways you and your staff communicate with other Network members from Essential to Not Useful. If you haven't used one or more please mark it "Haven't used":

	Not			Haven't
	Useful		Essential	Used
Meetings (Professional associations, consortia meetings)				
Email				
Medlib-L				
Docline-L				
Other (specify)				
Other (specify)				
Other (specify)				

There are a number of means the MCRML uses to communicate with its Network members. Please rank the usefulness of these from Essential to Not Useful. If you haven't used one or more please mark it "Haven't used":

Not			Haven't
Useful		Essential	Used

MCMLA Listserv			
MCRML Website			
Plains to Peaks Post, the MCRML Newsletter			
RML Weekly News via email			
RML News Archive			
Personal calls/visits from RML liaison			
Other (Specify)			

B) You and the NN/LM Network

your view, what are the benefits of membership in the NN/LM MCR? (Check all that	:
Docline	
NLM Databases	
Consumer Health Information Sources such as MEDLINE <i>plus</i>	
Funding Programs	
Continuing Education	
Enhanced communication with other library professionals	
Opportunities to provide input on Network programming	
Free promotional materials (pens, posters, bookmarks,	
her	
re there other benefits or services you would like to receive from the Regional Med brary that you are not currently receiving or are not currently available? For examp leconferences, consortia buying, etc.	

Please indicate which NLM services you use and how you feel about them:

	Use	Don't Use or Need	Haven't Used Yet	Like	Don't Like
Docline					
PubMed					
MEDLINEplus					
Funding programs to support your projects					
Courses sponsored by the NN/LM					
Communication with other librarians					
Free Promotional materials					

The information you have provided will be used to improve programs and services and to evaluate the work of the MidContinental Regional Medical Library. Please call your liaison at 1-800-338-7657 with any questions about this survey or about the Regional Medical Library's programs and services.

Return completed survey by December 20, 2002 to

Network Members Survey
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